CROWN ZELLERBACH CORPORATION

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SAN FRANCISCO

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Recently, two of Crown Zellerbach's plants at Camas, Washington and North Portland, Oregon, were crippled for a time by the worst Columbia river flood in 54 years. Since then there have been many inquiries concerning the extent of damage to our plants and the time when production would be restored. These inquiries came from customers, salesmen and Crown Zellerbach people living in communities where the flood did not reach.

The damage at both plants was substantial. The job of restoring production was tremendous. However, Camas production is now virtually back to normal. Full production at Western Waxed's North Portland plant is confidently expected by July 7 if materials arrive in quantities anticipated. Rubber printing plates were made there on June 26. Since then there has been gradual restoration of production on the waxers, slitters, gummers, presses, etc. By last week end the gumming plant was virtually back in full production.

However, there is a deeper story of the flood which could not hope to be fully covered by official reports or general newspaper stories. It is a story of human behavior in time of crisis. In short, the story of how Crown Zellerbach management and men met the challenge of the river. The article on the ensuing eight pages was written several weeks ago when the flood waters were still deep in the plants and when men were still moving about with boats, in hip boots and "overboard" suits. It does not detail all happenings. It does touch rather intimately on attitudes, abilities and acts of men which management and men of other divisions may want to know about. It is called: "Men Against The River."

MEN AGAINST THE RIVER

By William D. Welsh

When swollen waters of the Columbia River backed through a railroad grade on a recent Sunday afternoon to sweep away and smash the homes of 19,000 Vanport, Oregon people into a pathetic shambles of broken, water-soaked matchsticks, there were many people quickly on the scene. In a matter of minutes, people who had heretofore lived uneventful lives, began to live dangerously. Before darkness fell they had risen to heroic heights of joint human endeavor.

Among these were people who forgot personal danger in their task of rescuing the perishing.

There were men who went out onto the dikes with sandbags, shovels, trucks, bull-dozers and guts to strengthen the weakened sections to resist the lapping menac-ing floodwaters.

There were people of the agencies, the churches, the lodges and the schools who forgot about slogans, creeds, passwords and curriculums in the warmth of a common welcome to the helpless who were fed, clothed, sheltered and comforted.

There were little nameless people who opened their doors and exemplified the philosophy of a Biblical verse: "I was naked and ye clothed me; I was hungry and ye fed me; I was homeless and ye took me in".

The list is long. The common humanitarian effort of the known and the unknown was magnificent. What cannot be written into the history of the flood certainly has already been etched on the hearts and memories of those who were helped when they needed help most.

Yet there is another story of this costly flood. It is a story of management and men who battled to keep industrial plants intact so there would be production and jobs as soon as possible after waters had returned to normal channels. It is the story of people who worked along the river. These are the people of the railroads, the steamboats, the log booms, the tugboats, the aluminum plants, the lumber mills, plywood mills, shingle mills, stockyards, pulp and paper mills, waxing and gumming paper plants, airfields and a host of others. It is a story which began far up in the tributaries of the Columbia and rode the current and challenged mankind all the way downstream to where the West's greatest river meets the sea.

As it did men of many other companies, the rising Columbia challenged the best that Crown Zellerbach men who work along its banks had in them. Up at the giant, sprawl-ing specialty plant at Camas, Washington, the river dared management and men to show their qualities of leadership, nerve, resourcefulness, ability and imagination when it swung its water-weighted Sunday punch against the mid-riffs of the plant, the log booms and a number of Camas homes.

The Camas mill people were ready for the shock. Under Resident Manager Frank A. Drumb, who generaled his men against the river, a flood mobilization plan had been set up. It was Operation: Flood Control. When it became apparent from army

engineer's reports that there would be no stopping the rising Columbia from invading lower reaches of the plant, the mobilization plan was activated. An incredibly swift and complete job of getting machinery, electric motors, paper and equipment to higher levels was accomplished. This included thousands of tons of paper, hundreds of electric motors and other items of vital equipment, some as small as 3-inch paper cores, one as large as a new roll wrapping machine which was suspended in mid-air by heavy chains to keep it from the waters.

A dramatic part of the flood mobilization plan was the rushing of heavy lumber and heavy blocks from a Vancouver lumber yard in order to have dry racks for the rescued equipment and paper. Lumber trucks were escorted over the 16-mile trip with police escort. They were in time.

Reached by boat or over the rooftops, No. 15, newest of the paper machines, was kept operating. All other paper machines were stilled. Converting equipment ran on a partial production basis. Thousands of sandbags were set in place around expensive equipment which was too heavy to move. These kept most of the water out, with pumps taking care of the seepage. Men worked as usual in the store room and machine shop, with water almost reaching to the tops of their hip boots. Motorboats scooted through basements on inspection trips or carrying supplies in or out.

Outside the great mill, tall sulphur piles became islands. Mill tugs and men were on round-the-clock duty riding herd on the log booms, nudging the rafts out of the current and towards the shore in order to protect the vital wood supply. Water reached high up onto the transformer bank of the main power supply substation. The sawmill was not spared by the river.

Health was looked after, the mill men and women getting typhoid shots. Deodorant was placed in watered areas. Care was used in providing fresh drinking water.

To give it all a modern touch, a Vancouver radio station was used to relay information about plant operations, and resumption of work schedules to any who were idled by the flood.

For more than a week the flood level rose and fell in the mill basements, always returning to the vulnerable level of 37 feet and above. This was high enough to incapacitate all machines excepting No. 15.

On June 8, in the face of predictions of more crests to come, management and men moved against the river on a new front. It was decided to try and dehydrate vital areas in the basements under paper machines 3, 9 and 10 in order to restore production.

They knew it wasn't going to be a picnic.

There were many problems. How to get the water out and keep it out? Would the floors bulge upwards from water pressures beneath? Engineers were consulted. Supports were installed. Then the fight began in earnest.

Hip-booted men moved about in the water setting heavy sandbags in place around the vital areas. When the bag walls were built, pumps were set going to draw off water from within the walls, and kept going to care for the seepage. Decks were cleaned. Electrical equipment was dried off. Electric motors were reset. The signal was given to start the first machine.

Then came teletyped bulletins from the battlefront to hearten the salesmen who had been besieged by anxious, paper-hungry customers:

"No. 3 started Friday afternoon".

"No. 10 started Saturday afternoon".

"No. 9 started early Sunday morning".

The mill began to roll. The Columbia river had won the skirmishes. The Camas mill men were winning the battles.

Meanwhile, the same technique was applied in vital areas needed to restore electric motors for Machines Nos. 1, 2 and 11. All the while pumps were working within the sandbagged areas around 3, 10 and 9, for all the world like a leaking ship pumping the bilges to keep afloat.

By some miraculous means the woodmill was started.

The fight continued, not only to get new machines into production, but to keep the others running.

As this is written the entire mill is virtually in full production.

With the battle nearly over, Manager Frank Drumb took off his hip boots and relaxed long enough to tell San Francisco headquarters about the performance of his staff and men. Over long distance he said, in part:

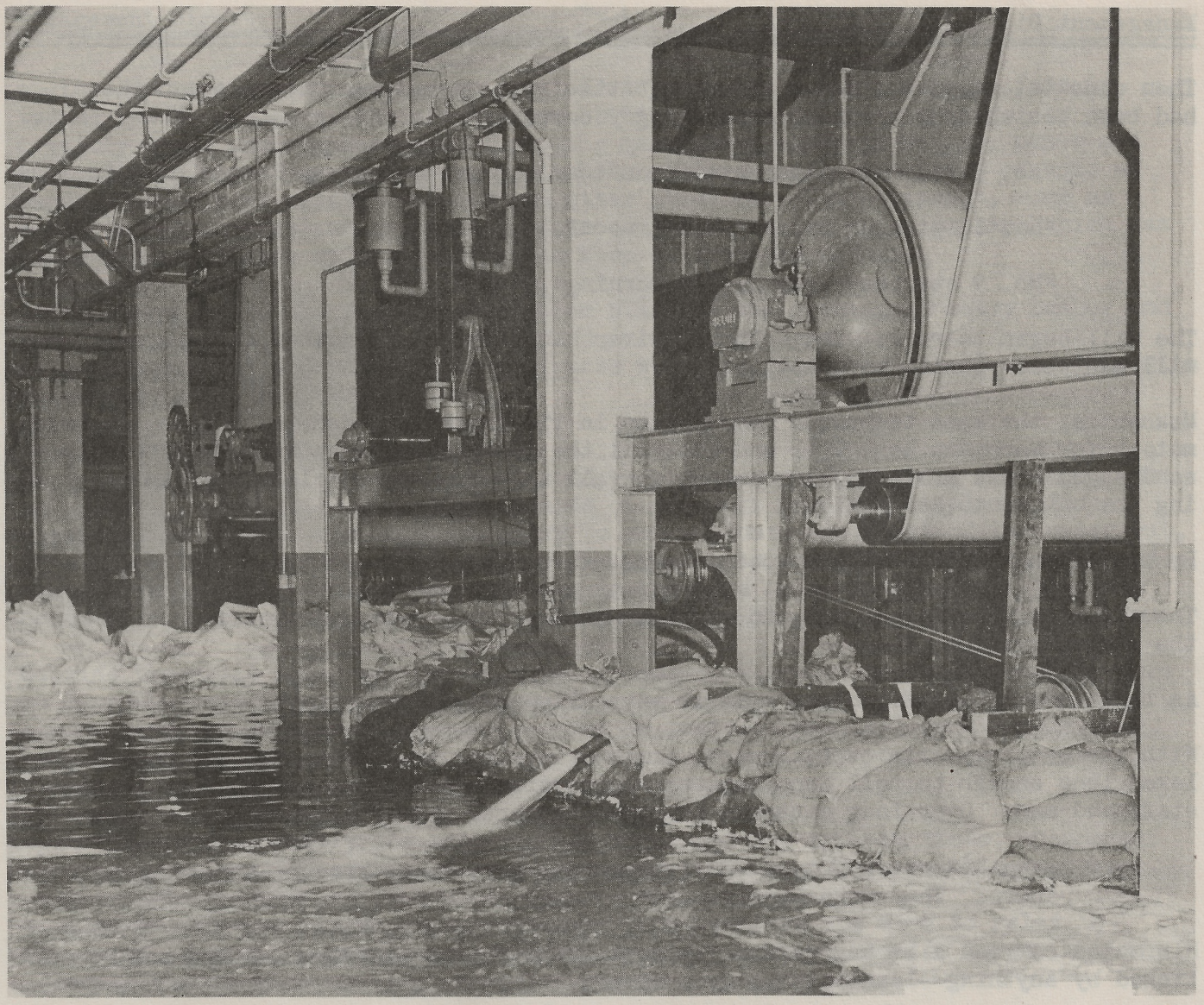
"You haven't any idea what these boys have been through up here. They were magnificent".

His voice carried a strong note of pride that his Camas men simply would not be licked by anything--least of all by a river.

Downstream, at Western Waxed Paper Company Division's waxing and gumming plant, the river struck without warning. This plant fronts on a big dike against Columbia river slough. This dike held. However, the same wall of water that carried away Vanport homes spread quickly across the whole flat. In a short time, the entire Western Waxed operation was incapacitated. There were few men in the plant that Sunday. Yet in a matter of minutes, at least thirty more were heading there across the dike. Aided by volunteers they removed electric motors, office records, printing plates, patterns and drawings, carrying them to higher ground. They helped a diver who went down to shut off water and sewer connections.

Like the men of Camas, they did many things which were not observed in the crisis. As the waters deepened, night came down. Men worked inside the plant with only the flicker from two dozen candles to light their way. And when the plant was finally completely inactivated, these men did not brood long over the very considerable loss, but quickly planned on how to restore production. Their fine plant was bruised. It must now be healed.

From the rooftops, management captained the program, pooling the ideas of superintendents, foremen and others. There were conferences on many problems. Everyone pitched ideas into the pot--so many, in fact, that it is impossible to identify or catalogue their sponsors. Manager Dilling of the waxing plant and



Above photo not only shows how Paper Machine No. 15 was kept running at Camas during the flood, but is also indicative of what was done to bring other machines back into production. Photo shows sandbag bulkheading around rope carrier sheaves in No. 15 machine room basement and illustrates what happened to the "broke" when it went down through dryer sections into the water. Seepage water is being pumped out of the inner area where vital equipment is operating.

The photo on the left is typical of how men worked in mill basements during flood. Hip boots were an important part of the "uniform of the day". This photo shows Storekeeper Dick Crippen doing "business as usual" in the mill store.

Airview of flooded Western Waxed plant at North Portland, which also shows some of Vanport homes which were carried towards the paper plant by flood waters which poured through a wide break in a railroad grade.

Front view of Western Waxed plant at North Portland, showing amphibious "Duck" which was used extensively during high water stages.

Manager Hammond of the gumming plant, have expressed appreciation for the ingenuity and willingness of everyone on the payroll. This appreciation is echoed by George Donald, new manager of the Western Waxed plant.

The friendships and associations with other firms and other people paid off during the flood crisis. Vital equipment and services were made available without quibbling. The request was answered quickly by the response. A privately-owned surplus amphibious "Duck" was secured. Piloted by a colored boy named Bill Woods, this lumbering monster navigated the roads and waterways between high ground and the plant on countless trips. Men were transported. Supplies were taken in. Some undamaged paper stock was brought ashore and apportioned to eager, yet understanding customers. Motors were brought out through plant windows, loaded onto the "Duck" and taken uptown to be conditioned for the startup.

75 wartime rubber "overboard" suits were brought in to encase men who worked in water inside the plant to rescue valuable motors and start the cleanup. One man was kept busy hot-patching punctures made in these suits as men movedabout. He used a tallow candle to provide the flame. Three electric generating plants were brought in to provide power for operating salvage equipment. Ten large traveling cargo loaders, cradled on huge navy surplus life rafts, were installed to load ruined wax paper rolls onto an LST which was lashed to the river bank, 150 feet in front of the plant. Cargo nets and cranes picked up ruined gum paper and loaded it onto the LST.

Watching this finished paper stock tumbling across the cargo loaders toward the LST was a disheartening sight. But no one was thinking about today's troubles. There was no time to worry about how much the flood cost Western Waxed. All hands were busy at the mountainous cleanup job necessary in order to get the plant rolling.

To view this effort, the writer recently rode the "Duck" down Union Avenue and Packers Avenue to the Western Waxed plant. The latter avenue was all under water, so deep that the "Duck" driver could not see the yellow line in pavement center, though he swore that he did. It was a heart-sickening journey. On either side were murky lakes in which crushed apartments and homes were twisted in a great vortex. No one can find words or write music capable of describing the horror. Watching the destruction in the waters, it seemed as though a great Paul Bunyan foot had pressed against and shattered an entire city of doll houses.

As the "Duck" rolled or splashed forward towards the Western Waxed plant, we saw pathetic evidence of the tragedy floating upon the waters. . .a child's football . . .a small wooden wagon. . .a scarecrow in full regalia, impaled on its floating wooden cross. . .the barely visible handlebars of a child's tricycle. . .a garden hose, neatly coiled. . .a large red rubber play ball. . .a woman's tired-looking fur coat, draped over a tree branch. . .a string of colored Christmas tree lights . . .a fading davenport. . .an easy chair. . .a bedspring and mattress on a rooftop.

Some of the houses looked as though the water had been nitroglycerin, exploding their sides from within. . .through a gap in one home we saw a dining table, unharmed, a canister upright in its center, as though some Vanport family had prepared the table for the evening meal. . .in another we noted a bed with smooth counterpane as though the housewife had just made it for the day. . .in still another we looked upon the orderly wardrobe of a woman, all dresses and coats hanging neatly as though completely unharmed.

Then the flotsam ludicrous. . .festoons of garlic bulbs. . .a woman's corset with its strings waggling crazily in an eddy. . .a Kelly green toilet seat. . .and the flotsam pathetic. . .a tiny girl's gingham dress, as pink as the flowers on the berry bush on which it had come to rest.

The argosy of the "Duck" was saddened and shocked by sights like these, and others . . .the great International Livestock Show buildings. . .Vanport College. . .the Red Steer restaurant. . .the great stockyards and Swift & Company's plant, all shoulder deep in water.

Finally, the "Duck" was docked at Western Waxed's plant, which resembled, for all the world, a mythical concrete island floating in a dead Sargasso sea. From the rooftop we looked into the plant on a scene which beggared description. Water everywhere, and standing in it were the presses, the slitters, the great piles of wax, the waxing machines--and hundreds of rolls of paper that would never wrap a loaf of bread or glorify a candy bar. Some unprocessed mill rolls were above the waterline. A few motors rode in dryness on top of these.

All of the unwaxed stock will be salvaged and go back to the beaters at Camas. Boomsticks were lashed together and the big rolls pushed out of the plant and held in rafts until the waters receded and rail shipments became possible. A substantial part of the processed paper was ruined.

Men clad in "overboard" suits which seal at the neckline waded laboriously in the water, carrying some bits of equipment to higher levels or pushing ruined paper rolls towards the cargo loaders. They did not look like earthbound mortals, but rather like strangely-costumed men from the planet Mars. Two shifts of them were busy at the job of salvage. All of them have been given typhoid shots. All are careful to drink only fresh water brought to them on the "Duck".

Many had personal troubles caused by the flood. Bob Cochrane, control chemist in the gumming plant, broke three ribs in a fall while supervising a night shift. 40 employees and their familes had all belongings destroyed in Vanport houses and apartments. Two lived in houseboats, which broke their moorings and were swept away. At least one had a fine home. Only the rooftop shows above the waters now. Yet we heard little or no complaint. There seems to be only one school of thought and action--to get the plant "wheeling again as quickly as possible".

Western Waxed has temporary quarters at 200 North Columbia Boulevard. It isn't so handy. But it is on dry land, which is something.

This is but part of the story of Crown Zellerbach men against the river. This chronicle cannot hope to itemize the hundreds of suggestions and acts of men at Camas and North Portland who fought the swollen giant. It can only emphasize that when the crisis came, men demonstrated their attachment for the plants in which they worked; and they fought the river better because of this attachment.

One or two illustrations are typical. After he had rowed his wife and two prized shotguns to safety from his ruined Vanport home, one worker turned the rowboat back into the flood and made his way through wreckage to the Western Waxed plant. There he worked through the night moving company gear and goods to higher levels.

The two daughters of A. S. Hammond showed a management potential which paid dividends. When the flood struck, these girls insisted that their Sunday escorts walk the dike

and help out at the plant. Not only that, but they telephoned 18 other girl friends and sold them on the same idea. That's how it was that 20 young and stalwart strangers worked with the plant's skeleton crew, taking up carpets, carrying typewriters, business machines and other goods to upper levels. The young men were surprised that they were on the payroll that night. They thought they had chivalrously volunteered because the need was urgent and their sweethearts insistent.

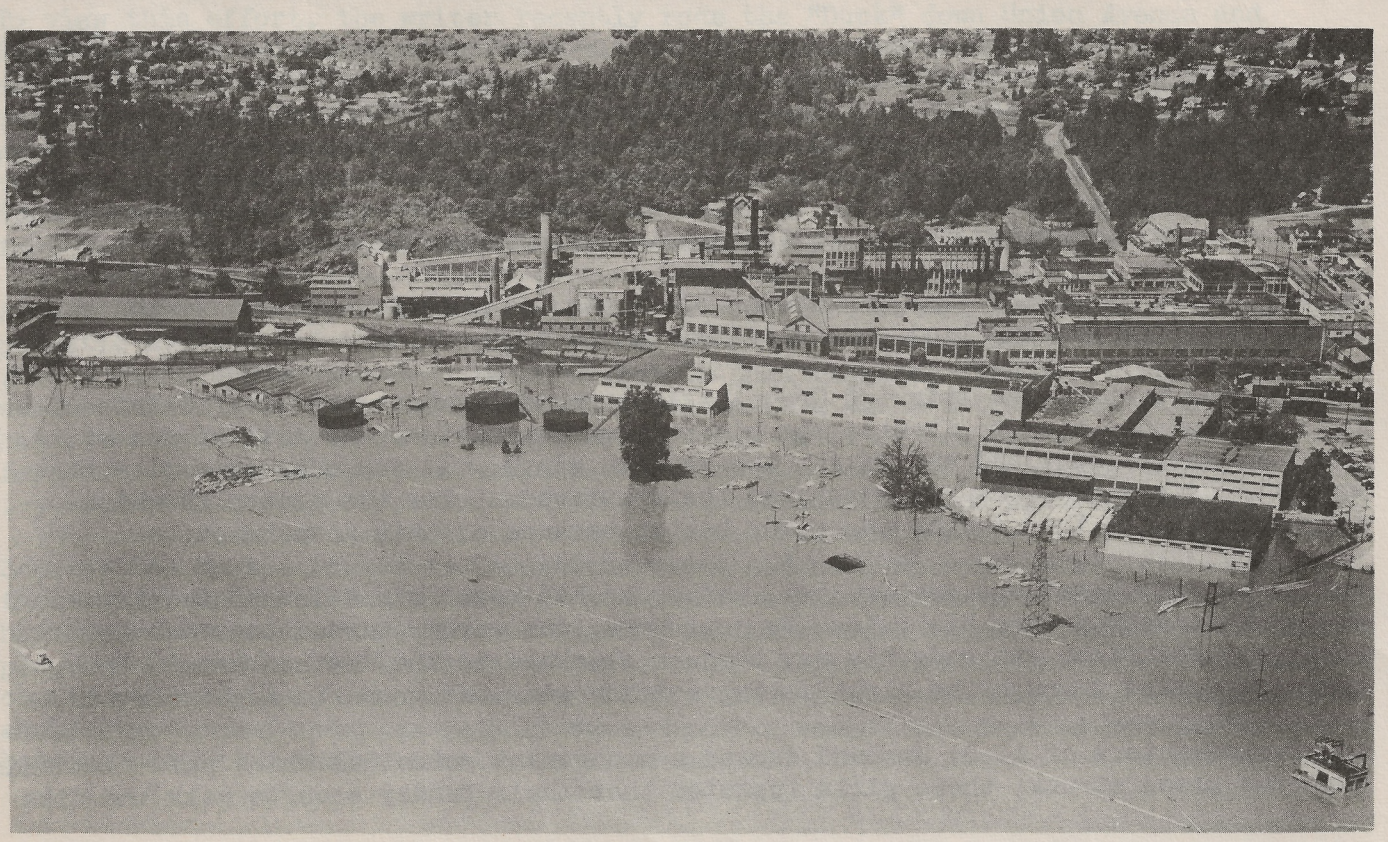
Somehow, a Western Waxed barge was held to the dike bank of Columbia slough. Onto it paper and equipment was carried from the plant.

There is another part to the story which touches on management's alertness to paper needs of the customers. With the printing plates saved, instructions were given to dispatch fourteen pressmen, slittermen, plate men and waxers to the Oakland plant in order to process as many orders as possible for the Northwest territory customers normally served from Portland. Additional work was done on Northwest orders in the Los Angeles plant.

Riding back from the plant on the "Duck", Cecil Dilling said to the writer: "It would take me weeks to tell you of the splendid, unselfish, tireless work of our supervisory staff and other employees. What they did means we can get started just that much sooner".

Colored "Duck" Pilot Bill Woods puts it in different language. He rolled his tired eyes and said: "These boys all worked together. That's the only way you can do it".

As we left the river that day the conviction grew that Bill had suggested a logical charter for groups of men the world over. At least he seemed to have found words adequate to describe why men moved in concert as they did at Camas and North Portland in order to win against the flood-angered, mightiest river of the West.



The Columbia river moves against the Camas plant.